

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claim Status

Claims 4, 5, 7 through 9, 18, and 19 are now pending in the application, with Claims 4 and 5 being independent. Claims 4, 5, and 7 through 9 are amended herein. Claims 18 and 19 have been canceled herein. It is respectfully submitted that support for these amendments and newly added claims can be found in the originally filed specification and that no new matter has been presented.

Claim Objections

Claims 7 through 9 are objected to for minor informalities therein. More specifically, the Examiner has indicated that they depend from cancelled Claim 1. In response, Applicants have amended Claims 7 through 9 so that the claims now depend from currently pending Claim 4. Applicants, therefore, request the objection to these claims be removed.

Claim Rejections

Claims 4, 5, and 7 through 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Appln. Pub. No. 09-222839 (Numagami, et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,219,506 (Morinaga, et al.), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,228,633 (Corbic), all previously cited and applied.

The rationale underlying the rejection is succinctly set forth in the Official Action.

Response to Rejections

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that Claims 18 and 19 recite allowable subject matter. While not conceding the propriety of the rejections, Claim 18 has been cancelled, and most of its subject matter has been incorporated into independent Claim 4. Claim 5 has been amended to be in independent form, and now includes most of the subject matter previously recited in Claim 19. Although not verbatim, the subject matter of Claims 18 and 19 has been mostly incorporated into Claims 4 and 5. Thus, it respectfully submitted that amended independent Claims 4 and 5 now recite allowable subject matter and are, therefore, allowable over the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination.

Dependent Claims

Claims 7 through 9 are directly dependent on Claim 4. It is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable by virtue of being dependent on an allowable independent claim and in their own right for further defining the invention.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are allowable over the art of record, and that the application is in condition for allowance.

This Amendment could not have been presented earlier in the prosecution, inasmuch as it was earnestly believed that the claims heretofore on file were in condition for allowance. No new claims have been presented. Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit the amendment does not present any new issues, and therefore can be entered at this

time.

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, and early passage to issue of the present application are earnestly solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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